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OLD NORTHAMPTON

BY

CHARLES DOWNER HAZEN, PH.D.

PROFESSOR OF HISTORY IN SMITH COLLEGE

AN ADDRESS

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IN sixteen hundred and fifty-four Louis the Fourteenth, called the Great, was king of France and of Navarre. The splendors of Versailles had not yet broken upon the astonished world, but the king was already the focal point of the interest of Europe in war, in diplomacy, and in manners. He was also an American monarch ruling over an indefinite and growing forest kingdom. French explorers were heroically plunging into American woods, and traversing American waters, purposing the greater glory of their brilliant king. Yet in that year Lake Ontario and Lake Erie were but faintly known, and the Ohio River had not yet been discovered. A quarter of a century must still elapse before La Salle should make his wonderful voyage down the Mississippi, proving at least that not that way lay the

road to coveted Cathay, and still another quarter of a century must go by before New Orleans should be founded.

In sixteen hundred and fifty-four Germany was just beginning to recover from the frightful ravages of the Thirty Years' War, in which she had lost a third of her population and had suffered indescribable woe.

In sixteen hundred and fifty-four the Great Elector was struggling, by craft and energy, by a scrupulous indifference to scruples, to weld the poor and scattered fragments of Prussia into a state that should command respect, and was largely succeeding. His capital, Berlin, was an inconsiderable village of six thousand inhabitants.

In sixteen hundred and fifty-four Queen Christina, the brilliant and erratic daughter of Gustavus Adolphus, abdicated her throne of Sweden and entered upon that strange life of retirement which furnished amazement and entertainment to Europe for many years to come.

In sixteen hundred and fifty-four Oliver Cromwell was Lord High Protector of Great

Britain. Originally a Huntingdon farmer, he had risen with unexampled swiftness and by sheer force of will and insight to a position of unquestioned primacy among English-speaking men. He moved grandly through the most tortuous and tumultuous period of English history, audacious, adroit, masterful "in the world of action," says the most judicial of English historians, "what Shakespeare was in the world of thought, the greatest because the most typical Englishman of all times."

While this most typical Englishman of history was endeavoring to govern a turbulent state in a sea of trouble, other Englishmen, sharing his beliefs and ambitions, were engaged upon a work to be rated no less high in the long result of time. Cromwell himself is said to have been at one time on the point of leaving England for America forever. He came not, but others came, and the great dispersion of the English race began, — the most momentous fact in modern history.

Our national motto has ever been, "Go West, go West, go further West," a motto

nearly as old as the settlement of this country. The colonists were fully conscious of this impulse in their blood. Hardly had the few settlements been founded on the eastern shore than the enterprising adventurers took the Indian trails, and as early as 1633 the fame of the Connecticut River — the long, fresh, rich river, as these pioneers called it — began to be bruited along Massachusetts Bay. . . Whole bodies of men or churches moved over a hundred miles westward into the wilderness. New Haven on the Sound, Hartford, Wethersfield, and Windsor were established by people from eastern towns; finally Springfield, in 1636, the sole frontier post of Massachusetts in the west. The colonization of this valley was thus perhaps the earliest illustration in our history of the potent western fever. Religious differences were involved in the settlement of some of these earlier towns, though the economic motive was always present. The latter, however, was the sole cause of the settlement of Northampton. Men came first to these meadows for the simple reason that they

believed they could make a better living here than where they were: which is the very reason why men have gone to Ohio, Illinois, and the Pacific slope. We may call the founding of this town a typically American act, in a sense in which the founding of Massachusetts Bay, of Rhode Island and New Hampshire, was not, for in those cases motives were in play which have had only a slight rôle in our history. The plan for the settlement originated in Hartford, and it was at first chiefly Hartford men who came here. There were with them a few from the other river towns to the south. These people bought the land from the Indians for one hundred fathoms of wampum and ten coats. A hundred fathoms of wampum were probably worth a hundred and twenty-five dollars.

X There is no documentary proof of the route by which the founders of this town made their entrance here, but the probability is that they came by the course which afterward became the travelled way to the towns to the south. This roadway entered the town very nearly where West Street is now

located. The crossing at Mill River was at or near the site of the present bridge, though very many years were to pass before there were bridges anywhere. In what way their household goods were conveyed hither, whether on horseback or in ox-carts, is not known. On what day they arrived, how many there were in the first company of settlers, and where they choose their home lots, are all matters of conjecture. Unquestionably some of them came in 1654. Two years later there were about twenty-five families here.

The first home lots, usually consisting of four acres, were allotted on what are now King and Pleasant, Market and Hawley, Bridge and Main streets. These designations, needless to say, did not come into use for a long while,—indeed, until the nineteenth century.

The feeling of isolation, the bitter homelessness, the sense of separation from all that had thus far been accomplished in this world for the greater profit and dignity of men, society, institutions, arts, letters, comforts, the

influences that elevate and soften and endear life, these must have been the dominant sensations with the founders of Northampton, struggle with however much Puritan stoicism they might summon up to keep the emotion in check. They were on the lonely and exposed border,—a small, obscure, poor, and uneducated group of men. In 1654 there were probably not seventy-five thousand Englishmen in the New World, and these were widely scattered. A long, thin line of settlements, fringing the wild shores of the Atlantic from Maine to New York, and some settlements in Maryland and Virginia — that was all. New York, the Jerseys, were under the Dutch and Swedes. William Penn had not yet received the charter which he coveted. Neither Philadelphia nor Baltimore had yet been founded. The Carolinas and Georgia had as yet no charters and no settlers. A feeble Spanish colony was clinging amid southern fevers to an uncertain life at St. Augustine. As these founders of our town unpacked their few goods that night of their arrival here, the sense of their utter

loneliness must have been crushing indeed. To the east of them, unbroken solitude for sixty miles or more. Lancaster, northeast of Worcester, was the nearest settlement in that direction, and that was far from the rest of the settlements, which were close upon the Bay, and Lancaster had only been founded the year before. Along the line traversed in the main by the Boston and Albany Railroad there was no settlement between Cambridge and Springfield. Worcester was not yet. Indeed, for forty years after the settlement of Northampton a great part of the county of Worcester was a wilderness. To the south, Springfield was the nearest village, and the only one in Massachusetts. To the west Albany was the nearest, and to the north there was no sign of civilization until the shores of the St. Lawrence were reached and the fleur-de-lis was seen floating upon its white background from the Plains of Abraham.

Every step in the process of settlement that has carried us to the Pacific has been, of course, simply an advance to a new

frontier. The founders of Northampton were true frontiersmen in their day. Courage they had, "steadfastness in the bold design." There was no thought of drawing back, but poverty of every sort, of things material, intellectual, and social, was the chief characteristic of their lives. The only poverty they did not know was that of opportunity.

It takes an effort of the imagination to picture the life of this town two centuries ago. There were no roads, no bridges, no mails, no newspapers to keep up the connection with the human race. A kind of cartway was early established to Springfield, but toward Boston or Albany, or the north, no cart could travel for many years. Our town representatives went to the legislature on horseback by the old Bay Path, merely a bridle-path through the woods. The Indians had the custom of burning the woods each year, which kept them free from undergrowth and made them penetrable in every direction on foot or horse; but that was all.

As late as 1799 there were only seven

post-offices in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It was in 1792 that Northampton was first made a postal centre, under the administration of Washington. Previous to that time the nearest one was Springfield, and every one who had occasion to visit that town was expected to bring whatever mail-matter there might be which was destined for Northampton or the neighboring towns. No regular means of conveyance up and down the valley then existed, and very little correspondence was carried on by persons living in the interior towns. Only an occasional traveller or an itinerant tradesman brought news of the outside world.

The first regular stage line was not established until 1792, when the town was already one hundred and forty years old, and this went only once a week from Springfield to Hanover, New Hampshire. On Tuesday one might start north, on Thursday one might start south. There were no newspapers to increase the gaiety of the town during all this period, for though "The Hampshire Gazette" is older than "The

London Times," it was not founded until 1786. Surely the people of Northampton were in a position to appreciate the blessings of solitude.

Yet here and under such conditions there was planted what, after two hundred and fifty years, Baedeker, the objective, passionless, disillusioned observer of the modern world, recognizes as "a lovely, elm-shaded city, the frontispiece of the book of beauty which Nature opens wide in the Connecticut Valley." Much must have been accomplished during that time.

"The gist of the matter is, not where a man starts from, but where he comes out," says Lowell; and this is as true of a town as of an individual. The men who founded Northampton were manual laborers prepared to wrest their fortune from the soil. No profession was represented in that little band that found its way from Hartford hither two hundred and fifty years ago.

For seventy-five years no physician was to reside here, and lawyers everywhere throughout the colonies were largely a product of the

eighteenth century. But no sooner was the necessary work of axe and hammer and saw fairly under way than these Englishmen — for most of them had been born in England — sought to enrich and deepen the local life. And thus the minister and the schoolmaster were added to the town.

John Cotton, the Boston divine, used to say that he loved to sweeten his mouth with a piece of Calvin before he went to sleep. The taste for this heroic confection was widespread at this time, and was fully shared by the founders of this town. Their leading intellectual interest for many decades was religion. Though only worldly considerations led to the settlement of Northampton, the men who came were most devout. The first public building erected here was ordered shortly after their arrival, and was the meeting-house. It was twenty-six feet long, eighteen feet wide, and nine feet high. Though small, it was better than the houses that sheltered the people, for it was of sawn timber, while theirs were of logs. This building stood at the corner of the present Court-

House yard, probably jutting out into King Street. X It had two windows, a chimney, probably X no pulpit nor any other feature peculiar to houses of worship. The roof was made of thatch; for the meadows furnished excellent reed grass, which these men, born and bred in England, knew how to weave into a roof that should protect from rain. X There were no pews, but only benches without backs. Yet in this mean and lowly structure the intellectual and spiritual life of the town began. This was the second meeting-house built west of Lancaster, the first having been erected in Springfield a few years before. This building was used for town meetings; also for elections. To this day in republican Switzerland the church is frequently used as the polling place. It is felt that the place where men worship God is not desecrated by service to the State. At the table where the minister sat on Sunday or on lecture day sat at other times the moderator of the town. Worshippers were not summoned to church by a bell, for for thirty years there was no bell. A drummer

went through the streets or a trumpet was sounded from meeting-house hill.

The origin of the New England town is an open question, but one thing is sure, — that the men who first settled here were not past masters in the art of government. The records of the town show order and system only slowly emerging from confusion and uncertainty. By homely methods, by the steady application of common sense, the fabric of a vigorous and intelligent political life was built up. These men brought with them no finished institutions. Experimentation was the order of the day. Town meetings were held six or ten or twelve times a year; for the town had much to do. All land lots were assigned by vote of the citizens in town meeting, and for some time no one might sell his land without the consent of the town. Legislation had to be enacted against hogs, bears, wolves, crows, and dogs, as those denizens of earth and air gave trouble. In town meeting was chosen the minister, and there his salary was determined. In town meeting were elected commissioners

to end small causes. It was the town that voted that a boat be built at common expense to serve as a ferry at Hockanum.

People from outside were not permitted to come here and settle without the consent of the citizens in town meeting, for one of the keenest interests of every New England town was to keep the social body free from contamination.

As the problems of local politics arose they were settled by common-sense methods. Town offices were shunned, and many persons elected declined to serve. Consequently a law was passed by which all who were chosen to office must serve or pay a fine of twenty shillings. As town meetings were held frequently, there were many absentees. Straightway a system of fines was voted. Any absentee must pay a fine of twelve-pence, and if absent from the meeting which chose the selectmen, he must pay two shillings sixpence "unless the delinquent can give some just cause and the Towne so judge of it." If any man should leave the meeting before it was over and without

permission from the moderator he should pay twelvecence. These meetings were not yet clothed in the dignity of the Roman Senate. They were so disorderly that it was necessary to provide that there should be not more than one speaker at a time, upon a penalty of twelvecence for every offence. The prevalent tumultuous manner of conducting business was pronounced "dishonorable to God and grievous to many persons." Finally the custom of calling the roll at town meeting and fining those not present was adopted in 1690. In these ways the town attempted to force the coöperation of all in the civic life.

The first school was established ten years after the arrival of the settlers, when Mr. James Cornish was chosen first schoolmaster. It is interesting to know that the town, embarking upon its distinguished educational career, voted this protagonist of culture the princely salary of thirty dollars a year. He was to "take the benefit," that is, to receive tuition from the scholars too. The fact that he stayed here only two or three years may be

merely a coincidence. In 1687 the salary was fixed at two hundred dollars, and the system of scholars' fees abolished.

At the same time was established the first grammar school which could prepare for college. It is probable that Timothy Edwards, father of Jonathan Edwards, was for some time a teacher in this school. Thus, before the first half-century was over Northampton had a school organization adequate to the times.

The first schools in New England were not free. Here, as elsewhere, pupils paid tuition. Neither were they co-educational. It was not until 1792, nearly one hundred and forty years after the founding of the town, that girls were for the first time admitted to the public schools. This revolutionary change to co-education brought with it another — the employment of women as teachers as well as men, hitherto the only ones.

Thus by the close of the seventeenth century the institutional life of the town was well established. The rude forefathers of

the hamlet had planted firmly church and state and school.

Laborious, sensible, ambitious, the town produced in the eighteenth century a number of leaders, altogether disproportionate to its size, for the population in 1675 was perhaps five hundred, in 1775 certainly less than two thousand. Yet the fame of it had gone far and wide throughout the colonies.

As far as I can see into the dim and incomplete records of the past of this town the one person whose influence was most profound, most sympathetic, and most enduring upon the local life was Solomon Stoddard, the second pastor of the church. Of Boston birth, he was graduated from Harvard at the age of nineteen, and was the first librarian of that college. He came here in 1670, sixteen years after the founding of the town, and here he lived and labored for nearly sixty years, dying at the age of eighty-six.

It was the time when the town could take the impress of a strong and wise personality. "He grew up with it, moulded and shaped the religious education of two generations,

and died, revered, honoured, and sincerely mourned." He was the one educated man in the community during much of that period. His was no local reputation. Timothy Dwight, a former President of Yale, says in his book of travels, which is one of the soundest sources of early New England history, "that he possessed, probably, more influence than any other clergyman in the province, during a period of thirty years." "His light and influence," said the Boston "Weekly News Letter," "went out through the whole country and gave a name and reputation to the town. He was "a wise & judicious Casuist," says this paper in the quaint language of the day, "whose Advice & Council were much sought & valu'd by the perplex'd & scrupulous." He was a theological leader of renown, and Stoddardeanism was a school of thought that took its name from him.

For many years it was his custom to pay an annual visit to Boston. The people flocked in crowds to hear him preach, says a contemporary, and those who were unable

to get into the church built stages around the walls, so that every window was filled with the listening multitude.

Here labored for a quarter of a century Jonathan Edwards, laying deep the sure foundations of his thought. Two Americans of the eighteenth century won an international reputation as thinkers,—Benjamin Franklin and Jonathan Edwards,—two men as dissimilar as well could be; the one an experimentalist and realist, the poet of common sense, as the French critic Sainte-Beuve has called him; the other a theologian and metaphysician, a scholar and idealist. Jonathan Edwards is the only Northamptonian, as far as I am aware, who has penetrated that temple of fame, as fame reveals itself to the British mind,—the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Let no Northamptonian think the dismissal of Edwards from his pulpit a blot upon the fame of this town. When Professor Allen, his latest and his admiring biographer, says that the dismissal of Edwards was indeed the salvation of the church in Northampton, and that the people of North-

ampton had the highest interests of themselves and their children at stake in their contest with their pastor, we are justified in refusing to apologize for the action of the town, save for the manner of it—not for the central fact.

But leaving all this aside, the life of this town was enriched forever by the influence of that personality. I know of no better description of Edwards' life in Northampton than that given by Dr. Rose. "The reader of the scanty records of his life here receives," says he, "the impression of something mysterious, indistinct, elusive. It was a lofty and rapt existence, apart, unearthly. . . . It was a life of amazing industry, but all its interests were intellectual and professional. It was the life of a scholar,—meditative, solitary in a manner, self-centred, without many books, ascetic, remote, untravelled, mystical. His two companions were the intuition and the spirit. What can one make of a life like that, with its twelve or thirteen hours a day of intense study, its heavenly preoccupations and profound reveries?"

One is reminded by this career of Emerson's stirring pæan to the scholar's life: "Neither years nor books have yet availed to extirpate a prejudice rooted in me, that a scholar is the favorite of Heaven and Earth, the excellency of his country, the happiest of men. His duties lead him directly into the holy ground where other men's aspirations only point. His successes are occasions of the purest joy to all men. Eyes is he to the blind; feet is he to the lame. His failures, if he is worthy, are inlets to higher advantages."

Here lived Joseph Hawley, lawyer and leader of men. In those critical years that succeeded the passage of the Stamp Act, every action of the English government was canvassed and scrutinized. The matter was delicate and dangerous. A discussion, able and thorough, lasted ten years before the colonists reached the decision to withdraw from the British Empire. In this intellectual contest, which preceded the military contest, and without which the latter never could have been, Hawley was a power. In the Legislature, in the Provincial Congresses,

his utterance was clear and bold and weighty. He was the leading public man of western Massachusetts.

Some of the great phrases of the Revolution, which carried nerve and flame to many a soldier and civilian in those days of stress, were his. The first time that the phrase "The Parliament of Great Britain has no right to legislate for us" was ever publicly uttered in these colonies, was when it fell from the lips of Hawley, in the State House in Boston.

Years later, in 1774, when every other leader was refusing to admit that war was the only way out of our difficulty with Great Britain, but was insisting that in conciliation lay the panacea, he sent this blunt and prophetic assertion: "Fight we must finally, unless Britain retreats. Our salvation depends upon a persevering union. Every grievance of any one colony must be held as a grievance to the whole, and some plan be settled for a continuation of Congresses, even though Congresses will soon be declared by Parliament to be high treason."

It was of Hawley that this story is told: During the Revolution he was deeply despondent about the issue. Caleb Strong, returning from the legislature, talked with him and heard him say, "We shall both be hung." "No, Major Hawley," said Strong, "probably not more than forty will be hung—we shall escape." "Sir," said Hawley, aroused, "I would have you understand that I shall be one of the first three to hang."

Here lived Seth Pomeroy, most human and attractive of them all, untutored leader of men, straightforward, spontaneous, with grit and fight in every drop of blood that coursed through his active veins, blacksmith, gunsmith, famous warrior against the Indians and the French, major in the expedition against Louisburg, member of Provincial Congresses, his very presence anywhere worth a battalion of soldiers, known throughout the colony, a tower of strength.

At the very beginning of the trouble with Great Britain it was truly said of him that he was "very high in liberty." Stirring indeed is what we know of his story. Worn out

with the toil of the Second Provincial Congress and with his military duties, — he was then sixty-nine years old, — about the middle of June, 1775, he came back to Northampton for a period of rest. Only twenty-four hours elapsed after reaching Northampton when a messenger arrived from General Putnam announcing the contemplated movement of the British upon Charlestown Heights. "Aware that this would be the signal for hostilities," says a recent English historian, "he took his horse from the team and was quickly on his way to Boston. Twice changing horses on the route, all through the hours of the night he urged his onward way, and at noon on the day of the battle of Bunker's Hill he reached Cambridge. There he borrowed a mount from the Commander-in-Chief, but the cannon fire that raked Charlestown Neck was so hot that he did not conceive himself justified in risking an animal not his own property. His person, however, belonged to himself: so he walked across the Isthmus and up to the rail fence, where he was received with cheers and provided with a musket."

Toward the close of the day, continues this writer, "the brow of Bunker's Hill was a place of great slaughter. It was there that Putnam, in language that came perilously near a breach of the rule against swearing in the Military Regulations of Massachusetts, adjured the colonists to make a stand and give them one shot more. Pomeroy, without a sword, but with a broken musket in his hand which did as well, took upon himself to see that his younger countrymen marched steadily past the point of danger. Warren never left the redoubt, for he fell where he had fought, and he was buried where he had fallen: a bright figure, passing out of an early chapter of the great story as unexpectedly and irrevocably as Mercutio from the play. Pomeroy lamented that on a day when Warren — ardent, hopeful, and eloquent — had fallen, he himself, 'old and useless,' escaped unhurt. He had not long to wait. Having resigned his post of Brigadier-General, for which he no longer felt himself fit, Pomeroy became a regimental officer, and, with his seventy years upon him, went

campaigning in the Jerseys. A course of bivouacs brought him a pleurisy, and he died for America just as certainly as if, like his young friend, he had been shot through the head at Bunker's Hill."

The most conspicuous and notable public life that stands upon Northampton's roll of honor is that of Caleb Strong. A direct descendant of Elder John Strong, one of the most prominent figures in the settlement of Northampton, a graduate of Harvard College, a lawyer of high standing, Caleb Strong was the recipient of a remarkable degree of public confidence and honor. Eleven years he was Governor of this Commonwealth, a longer period than that allotted to any other governor in the history of the State, save to John Hancock, to whom eleven terms were likewise given.

When independence was declared and Massachusetts was obliged to give herself a constitution in place of the charter no longer adequate to her situation, Caleb Strong was one of the committee of four that drew up that instrument which remained

for forty years the fundamental law of the State. The other three were John Adams, Samuel Adams, and James Bowdoin. For nine years he was State Senator, for seven he was United States Senator. The highest dignity he ever held was that of member of the Philadelphia Convention that framed the Constitution of the United States. In that plain brick building in Philadelphia already immortalized as the place from which the Declaration of Independence was published to the world, sat the member from Northampton, with Washington, Hamilton, Franklin, Madison, Elbridge Gerry, Rufus King, Roger Sherman, Oliver Ellsworth, Robert Morris, Gouverneur Morris, James Wilson, Edmund Randolph, John Rutledge, the Pinckneys, and others, the fifty-five picked men whom this country had chosen to save it from its dire distress.

Lord Chatham praised the Continental Congress as an assembly of wise men beyond Greek or Roman fame. The Constitutional Convention was far wiser and remains the most august assembly that this

continent has ever seen. Nor was Strong an unimportant member of it. The records show his frequent participation in debate. Indeed, it seems that save for him no constitution would have been framed, the Convention would have been broken up, and the distress of this troubled country would have become deeper and more hopeless. The situation, briefly stated, was this: The Convention met in the middle of May. The middle of July came and nothing had been accomplished, save the engendering of bitterness. The large states were pitted against the small. The former wished population to be the standard in every branch of government; the latter wished equality of states in every branch, that thus they might be safe against the possible aggressions of the great. The difference was clean-cut, fundamental, and vital. Finally Connecticut suggested the well-known compromise of state equality in the Senate and inequality according to population in the House. But it seemed impossible to get a majority for the compromise. It was seen that five

states would favor and that probably five would oppose; that thus there would be no decision.

Massachusetts was a large state. Her interests were with Pennsylvania, Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia, and she had constantly been voting with the large states. Now Elbridge Gerry of Boston, and Caleb Strong of Northampton, decided that the interests of the nation were paramount to those of the large states. They voted against their two colleagues, King and Gorham. The vote of Massachusetts, thus divided, was lost, and the Connecticut compromise was adopted by a vote of five states to four, for the voting was by states. Elbridge Gerry and Caleb Strong thus directly brought to a happy issue the most vexed and threatening question that the Convention ever had to settle.

It is pleasant to reflect that the wisdom, the conciliatory spirit of a Northamptonian, was a national benefaction in the most critical moment this country had ever experienced up to that time.

It is an ungracious task to sketch only

three or four of the notable lives that have had Northampton for their stage, to the exclusion of the many, many others that have contributed to the rich inheritance of the town. Northampton has sent more men to the United States Senate than any other town in Massachusetts save Boston. In scholarship, in literature, in war, in philanthropy, in public spirit, Northampton has achieved a large measure of distinction.

In local history, which must forever constitute the true, authentic source of legitimate local pride, the work of Judd and Trumbull will remain a monument of patient and critical research.

Not only have great men lived here, but interesting occurrences have added a lustre to the annals of the town. Here Bancroft conceived the idea of writing the history of the United States while yet he was a teacher on Round Hill. Here Motley, the historian of the Dutch Republic, studied as a lad. Here Daniel Webster and Rufus Choate vied with each other in legal debate,—a contest of Olympians. Here Ralph Waldo

Emerson preached as a young man in the Unitarian Church, and here he later lectured. Here Henry Clay, at the height of his fame, spent a Sunday in 1833, attending the First Church in the morning and the Unitarian in the evening. Thus the Great Compromiser showed once more the ruling principle of his life, and thus the candidate for office revealed that large and wise tolerance of the politician for divergent schools of thought. Hither came Kossuth in 1852, the great Hungarian patriot and orator, Governor of the short-lived Republic of Hungary, and here he delivered one of those speeches which, by the beauty and swiftness of their diction and their eloquence, amazed the English-speaking world.

The most interesting visitor of all was Lafayette, who came in 1825. Lafayette's final visit to the United States was in many ways remarkable. He had given so generously of his youth and blood as to seem an American by adoption. Returning to France, he had played a conspicuous and a lofty rôle as a leader in the great revolution of that

country. "The splendor of his later reputation in the Old World heightened his reputation in the New. Now, after an absence of forty years, he returned a venerated hero of two great revolutions. A guest like this no nation was ever likely to entertain a second time. The heart of the whole American people went out to him in salutation." It is interesting to remember that the Marquis de Lafayette has traversed the length of Elm Street, that he has stood upon Round Hill, that he has held a reception on Main Street, that he has been escorted to the Connecticut River, as he resumed his way to Boston.

It is a privilege to share the life of this renowned and ancient town. Its charm does not lie only or chiefly in its neighborhood, its stately river, its rich intervalles, as the early writers called our meadows, in the mountains that stand like sentinels over it, but in the historic riches of its past, in the long and worthy record that has slowly unrolled here. The men who have lived here, and their deeds, are the precious treas-

ures of the community, and it is the part of wisdom to keep fresh and vivid memories so inspiring.

It was said of William the Silent that his character and life alone sufficed to keep the people of Holland firm and proud for a century and a half. Surely in the long and worthy annals of this town is to be found a similar potency.


We pay instinctive reverence to the past. Yet the present and the past war not with each other. The present is but an instant caught upon the wing. Its whole tone and color and import flash forth only when seen upon the calm and spacious background of all that has gone before. The wondrous interplay of personality for two hundred and fifty years is what explains this town, this college, this day. But this is the very heart of mystery, the book of seven seals, the real and baffling essence of the matter, which none can analyze or portray, yet which all perhaps can feel.






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